Tread Softly; for You Tread on My Dreams

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Tread Softly; for You Tread on My Dreams

by amoralagent

Summary

Will dreams of the stag, raven-black, standing proud and inquisitive as it rounds a corner and looks at him with those unblinking eyes, snuffing what sounds like a chortle.

Will has nightmares and Hannibal is always there to help the best he can.

Notes

Title: The Cloths of Heaven by W. B. Yeats

Will dreams of the stag, raven-black, standing proud and inquisitive as it rounds a corner and looks at him with those unblinking eyes, snuffing what sounds like a chortle. He watches it's antlers twist in a liquid motion, honey-like, blood through veins, up and up; he stares into it's passive gaze with a fixation that burns the backs of his eyes, as if he can flood it's tainted, abhorrent thoughts into his head if he tries hard enough. Those thoughts would be conjoined and lurk around him like shadows. Hannibal's thoughts stitched together with his own and hard to discern. Imaginative birth defects clogged with the scabs and pus of what was and what has yet to come between them, against them, towards them. They'd wail and claw inside his head until he'd want to do the same.

The stag's hooves drag heavy on the wooden floor. Clacking stops a step or two in front of him. He can feel the hot breath puff against his face and the pale of his throat, synchronised with his own, lungfuls of warm air weighting his chest. When he reaches out to touch the shifting form of the wild creature, it's head bows, and between his fingers it's ears and feathers equally prickle and give. Soft, with bladed edges.

It's antlers feel the same as fractured bones underneath his palm, weathered but undeniably strong. As soon as his hand makes contact the buck lowers it's head further in what could be perceived as a genuflect. But it's stance alters, growing wider before him, and suddenly the beast surges.

That's when he awakes, soaked through his shirt and catching his breath, grabbing his ribs to check for absent wounds. It always feels like he's bleeding, somewhere inside, where his heart is- his chest aching like it's been stuffed with cotton.

Will fought against Hannibal's consoling hands and warm voice, failing to settle his breathing that threatened to cause panic. Panting and throwing the duvet away, he moved to get out of bed, but Hannibal's fingers caught his wrist before he could move, pulling him back with strength to combat his refusal, making him kneel on the mattress with him, hand secured around the back of his neck to hold him close, the other trying to embrace. In the deep-bluish fog of darkness only moonlight limned them, but Hannibal scented Will's unshed tears past the sweat as they brimmed, a growl and ragged breaths interrupting the silenced night for prolonged moments.

Once Will gave in, Hannibal held their heads close to one another, cradling him, noses almost touching until Will's breathing slowly returned to normal. He recited Will's favourite poetry and whispered words of comfort, never asking questions, kissing his forehead, cheek, and the corner of his mouth. Then, Hannibal hugged him, moving him into his space to hold each other like they were drowning again, making sure to be gentle. Will pushed his head into Hannibal's chest, and in a hushed tone he heard Hannibal suggest focusing on the sound of his heartbeat.

The coldness of his dampened shirt made him shiver, Hannibal quickly took it off and pulled up the covers high again, holding him a little tighter.

In the no man's land between consciousness and oncoming nightmare, this time, Will heard the soft thump of a pulse, retreating clicks on stone, the sound of Hannibal's hands stroking

his hair. And a whisper of "I love you."

Before he could say it back, sleep took him away; away from Hannibal- not permanently though, try as it might. They'd never let that happen. Not again.

Never again.

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